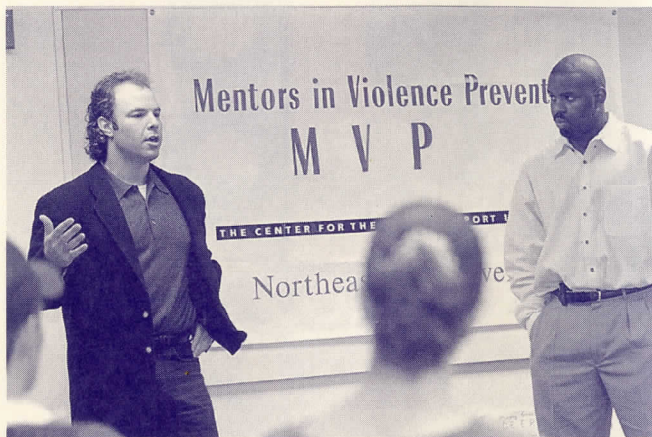


# WHAT IS THE MVP PROGRAM?



From left to right: Jackson Katz, Co-creator of the MVP Program, and Byron Hurt, MVP Program Associate Director, conduct an MVP training session with student-athletes in the AmeriCorps *Athletes in Service to America* program.

The Mentors in Violence Prevention (**MVP**) Program, founded in 1993 by Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society, under the direction of Richard Lapchick, motivates male student-athletes and student leaders to play a central role in solving problems that have historically been considered "women's issues": rape, battering, and sexual harassment.

Until recently, few campus- or community-based programs encouraged young men to work actively on these issues. Today, the **MVP** Program seeks to educate male, as well as female, student-athletes about their responsibilities, helping them serve as role models for younger boys and girls.

During lively, interactive sessions with college athletic teams, student-athlete leadership councils, and other leadership groups, the racially diverse **MVP** staff uses the **MVP Playbook** to spark discussion about the ways non-abusive men can interrupt, confront, and prevent violence by their friends or teammates.

The **MVP** approach does not involve finger-pointing, nor does it blame student-athletes for the widespread problem of gender violence. Instead, it sounds a positive call for proactive, preventive behavior and leadership.

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT MVP

### Michael J. Hooker

President, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; former President, University of Massachusetts

"The focus on student-athletes gives campus leaders the means for examining their roles as leaders on campus, particularly in preventing violence against women. Our campuses have already felt the impact of MVP. I fully support the program and recommend it to any institution fortunate enough to be involved."

### Vivian Fuller

Athletic Director, Northeastern Illinois State University

"It is critical that young men hear from other men about these issues, just as it is critical that young women have a forum to discuss ways to be empowered in various situations. MVP does both, utilizing student-athletes as positive agents of change. Every campus should have MVP—or a program just like it."

### C. M. Newton

Athletic Director, University of Kentucky

"MVP is a creative and effective way to get student-athletes and athletic department staffs talking about some of the critical issues of gender violence that all of us, inside and outside college athletics, need to be addressing. This program takes the right approach. I highly recommend it."

### Matt Russell

Linebacker, University of Colorado

"I was really excited to be chosen [for a special MVP project] and to speak out against this violence. I think it's an issue every guy ought to stand up for. It's not something the women's movement should have to bear the burden of."

**For more information about MVP training sessions, scheduling, and fees, please contact:**

**The MVP Program**

**Northeastern University's**

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**MENTORS IN  
VIOLENCE  
PREVENTION**



## HOW BAD IS THE PROBLEM OF GENDER VIOLENCE?

- One in six college women report having been the victim of rape or attempted rape at some point during the previous year.
- Battering is the single leading cause of injury to women in the United States. Abuse in relationships is a growing concern of college and high school health and law enforcement officials.
- Sexual harassment happens in all kinds of schools, to all kinds of girls and young women. There are few differences in terms of type of school, or racial or ethnic background.
- A broad national study revealed that one in twelve male college students surveyed had committed acts that meet the legal definition of rape.

## THE BYSTANDER APPROACH TO PREVENTION

**MVP** views male student-athletes not as perpetrators or potential offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers. This emphasis reduces the defensiveness men often feel when discussing issues of gender violence. Instead of feeling targeted for criticism, young men in **MVP** sessions learn how they can work with their peers and younger men to prevent this violence.

In the sessions, conducted in locker rooms and classrooms, **MVP** staff present and discuss concrete options for intervention in situations ranging from an attempted rape in a residence hall to sexist comments overheard during a bus trip.

The key teaching tool is the **MVP Playbook**, which consists of a series of scenarios, like the one reproduced on the right.

## MVP FEMALE STUDENT-ATHLETE PROGRAM

The **MVP** Female Student-Athlete Program encourages college-level female student-athletes to act as leaders on gender-violence issues. Traditional prevention efforts have focused on how women can protect themselves or avoid dangerous situations.

**MVP** focuses on women and girls not as potential victims, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abuse, support one another, and act as mentors and role models for younger girls.



MVP Program Director Don McPherson addresses a group of male students.

### SLAPSHOT

A teammate pushes and then slaps his girlfriend at a party. People are upset but don't do anything. He's not a close friend, but he is your teammate.

#### TRAIN OF THOUGHT:

IF NOBODY ELSE IS STEPPING IN, WHY SHOULD I? .....IT COULD GET UGLY.....HE COULD TURN ON ME.....AM I READY TO GET INTO A FIGHT, IF IT COMES TO THAT?.....WHAT IF HE'S GOT A WEAPON?.....BESIDES, IF THE GIRLFRIEND DIDN'T LIKE THAT SORT OF TREATMENT, WOULDN'T SHE ALREADY HAVE BROKEN UP WITH HIM?.....IS IT ANY OF MY BUSINESS?.....BUT IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING, I'M SAYING IT'S OKAY FOR A GUY TO ABUSE A WOMAN.....WHAT SHOULD I DO IN THIS SITUATION?

#### OPTIONS:

1. Nothing. It's none of my business.
2. Say something and/or get a bunch of people to contain the boyfriend, while others try to get the woman away from him.
3. Talk to the woman, and let her know I am willing to help her.
4. When he calms down, either on the scene or later, talk to him about getting counseling to deal with his abusive behavior.
5. Report the incident to the coach or the athletic academic advisor.
6. Personal Option: \_\_\_\_\_

## MVP IN ACTION

Since 1993, the **MVP** Program has worked with thousands of college and high school student-athletes, and trained professional staff members on campuses across the country. It has also provided a range of presentations, trainings, and other services to a number of institutions and groups. Among

**MVP's** accomplishments:

- Conducted sessions with more than 2,500 student-athletes on football, basketball, hockey, baseball, lacrosse, soccer, volleyball, field hockey, gymnastics, and track teams at more than a dozen universities and colleges, including Kentucky, Nebraska, Loyola Marymount (CA), St. John's (NY), Seton Hall, Trinity, Tufts, and Northeastern.
- Taught professional trainers to implement the **MVP** model at participating institutions.
- Led presentations and workshops for more than 5,000 high school and middle school students.
- Developed original teaching materials, including **MVP Playbooks** for college-level male and female student-athletes, along with accompanying trainer's manuals.
- Made presentations to and collaborated with Greek leadership, residence hall staffs, and health educators to develop strategies for working within those systems.
- Acted as a critical training and outreach component of *Athletes in Service to America*, a four-state AmeriCorps-sponsored program also run by Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society.
- Made presentations at many professional meetings, including the *American Bar Association* national convention and conferences sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The NCAA has adapted material from the **MVP Playbooks** for use in their Life Skills curriculum. In addition, the **MVP** Program has been described in numerous magazines and newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Sporting News*, and the *Boston Globe*. **MVP** staff members have been featured on local and national radio and television news broadcasts and talk shows.

## MVP TRAININGS

**MVP** provides a range of services to college athletic departments, high schools, and others, including:

- Training sessions for men's and women's athletic teams.
- Training sessions for coaches and senior athletic staff members.
- Training sessions for campus-based professionals in health education, Greek affairs, residence life, counseling centers, and others, through a train-the-trainers model.